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SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ECON EFIN PREL NL

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS PRESSING FOR INVITATION TO PITTSBURGH  
G-20 SUMMIT

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY.

¶1. (U) This cable contains an action request; see para 5.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY. Dutch Prime Minister Balkenende is already pressing for confirmation that the Netherlands will be invited to the September 2009 G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh. The Dutch know their perseverance paid off with invitations to the past two summits and will pursue a similar strategy this time. END SUMMARY.

¶3. (SBU) Richard van Zwol, the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff and G-20 sherpa, asked the Charge d'Affaires to meet June 3 to discuss Dutch participation in the September 2009 G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh. He wanted to follow up on his mid-May visit to Washington when he met with Michael Froman at the National Security Council (NSC). Van Zwol reported he was told at that time the Administration had not yet reached a decision on invitations to the G-20. He said the discussion at the NSC about the G-20 agenda was substantive, but he left the meeting with the impression the Netherlands might be "disinvited" from the upcoming summit.

¶4. (SBU) Van Zwol cited the precedents set by President Bush's invitation to Prime Minister Balkenende to attend the November 2008 G-20 summit in Washington and Prime Minister Brown's invitation to attend the April London summit, as well as Prime Minister Berlusconi's invitation to attend the July G-8 in Italy in some capacity. He added that Germany had invited the Dutch to participate in the June 11-12 G-20 sherpas meeting to discuss the "charter for sustainable economy" with like-minded countries including the United States. He alluded to the constructive role the Netherlands has played in the coordinated international response to the financial crisis. Van Zwol also expressed his concern that "disinviting" the Netherlands from the Pittsburgh summit would send the wrong message to the Dutch public about its international standing.

¶5. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: Post requests guidance on:

-- The timeline for invitations and preparatory meetings leading up to the G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh.

-- The probability of the Netherlands receiving an invitation to attend the summit.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: Although not a G-20 member, the Dutch government has convinced itself it belongs at the G-20 table. After successfully lobbying for invitations to the previous two G-20 summits, the Dutch think arguing their case forcefully enough will keep this trend going. Participation in the G-20 is a now a sensitive point of national pride and self-worth at the Dutch government's highest levels. If an invitation is not forthcoming, they will continue pressing the U.S. government on this issue until the eve of the

Pittsburgh summit. END COMMENT.

GALLAGHER